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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer to ensure publication.

MINISTERING TO THE PEOPLE OF THE ORIENT

Dear Editor: The people of the Orient are filled with superstition, fear and strange ideas. It is, therefore, not always easy to minister to them. One day a mother with a month-old baby on her back came to the dispensary. A glance showed that the child was very sick. There were many abscesses on the child's head, which was covered with a black substance. Being interested in all Korean first aid, I inquired what the substance was. I received the information that if a child has a rash or spots on its body when it is born, the placenta is burned and the charred mass is mixed with oil and applied to the affected area. The result of the treatment in this case was several bad infections into which eight incisions had to be made. Would the mother leave the baby in the hospital? Oh, no! She couldn't do that, so it was decided that we would incise the abscesses in the dispensary. After I had cleaned off the black mass, I took up the razor to shave off the hair. This was too much for the frightened mother. "Don't do anything," she said. "Just put on some yok (medicine) and let us go." The Korean doctor tried to explain to her that it was far better to have incisions made and that the scalp must be prepared first. As a final resort, she said, "Stop. I can't have anything done, for I didn't bring any money." We assured her that even though she had no money it would be all right, and that for the baby's sake we would give the treatment. At last, after much persuasion, we gained her consent and were able to relieve the tiny baby. Another time a lady, following an examination, was told that she needed a slight operation which could be done under a local anesthetic. "But I can't be operated on," she said, and went home. In half an hour or so she was back again. Her husband, who was undoubtedly the master in that household, had sent her back posthaste. She was operated upon and greatly helped. One day a very sick baby was brought to the hospital by the father and, because it was so very sick, it was taken into the hospital. The fact that the baby was left in a foreign hospital was too much for the superstitious grandmother, and she came and took it away. It was a very indignant, more modern father who found that his child had been taken away. We had done all we could to prevent the child being taken, but we had to leave that domestic problem to be solved in the home. As for the poor baby, it died two days later. We explained to a man one day that it was best for his wife to enter the hospital for treatment. The wife objected and refused, but the husband remarked, "She doesn't know anything," and taking her on his back he carried her upstairs to a bed where she remained happy until she was able to go home. A baby, who was very sick with pneumonia, was one day brought into the hospital. The family had given up all hope because the grandmother had told them that if a child was taken sick before it was a hundred days old, it would surely die. The poor child was filthy dirty and was sadly in need of care. We were glad to be able to show them that with cleanliness and care a child need not die even if it is not a hundred days old.

Korea

D. M. B.

AN ERRING PUPIL

Dear Editor: A senior nurse went joy riding, but not alone, with a married man and returned after 11 p. m., slightly intoxicated. It so happened that the

superintendent was obliged to go away the next morning without seeing the pupil who, evidently feeling that she would be discharged, left the hospital without telling anyone that she would not return. Since then she has applied to several training schools for admittance and has even written her former superintendent for recommendation of allowance of time. She is not an immoral girl. She is younger than the average pupil, and evidently accepted the invitation when in a state of weariness and rebellion against hospital discipline, which most pupils feel some time during their training. It is impossible to reinstate her in the school without impairing the discipline, but if she is accepted into another school, graduated and registered, the pupils of the first school will justly feel that the nursing profession has no standards in spite of its claims to high ideals. The girl, however, is young—only 20—and regrets most sincerely her action, which may be a lesson of lasting benefit, for she was very ambitious of advancement in the profession of nursing. Would it be right to admit her to another school, without credit for time already spent in training, and let her try again? Some of us who pass judgment have never been exposed to temptation. Some are endowed with the strength to resist. Are there not those who must learn by their mistakes before they can develop their full strength of character?

OBSERVER.

THE EXPERIENCES OF AN HOURLY DISTRICT NURSE

Dear Editor: Little did a district nurse think, as she swung up the street, that she would be soon called upon to save a life. Upon reaching the home of the patient, the family physician greeted her with words to the effect that the maternity case was not a normal one, and that there was much to be done. Several hypodermics were administered and not a little anaesthetic given, after which events happened in rapid succession. The obstetrician after a long, hard siege, which no one can appreciate unless he understands this profession, called for water with which to baptize the infant, and sank exhausted upon the nearest object, which, fortunately, was a chair, exclaiming, "The child is dead!" Imagine if you can, the startling effect these words had on the prospective father, who had waited long and patiently for a son, only to see him snatched away, as he then thought, by the hands of Death. The nurse, taking in the situation, and being very human, asked the physician if she might try artificial respiration. "Anything, but it will be of no use," was the discouraging reply; but she went to work. After what seemed many minutes, she was rewarded by a faint choked sound, and feeling that this was a good omen, she called for hot and cold water, and dipped the child in each alternately. A few more minutes passed, but finally the babe gave one long cry. Needless to say, this acted as a stimulant upon the doctor, who at once came to the assistance of the nurse. As all good stories end, so shall mine. The doctor was delighted and the entire family joyous. They paid not only what was asked, but twice the amount, and I think that the gratitude shown by these people could be echoed by many, many others, who have been benefited by visits from the district nurses.

New Hampshire

M. T. H.

THE RELIEF FUND

Dear Editor: I thought you might be interested to know the result of my labors for the Relief Fund. At the annual meeting last October I presented the matter and received \$60. One nurse paid for five years. The first of December I forwarded \$40 to the treasurer. I did not ask for contributions during December, as the nurses usually need their money at that time. The first of February